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APOTHEOSIS AND AFTER LIFE. Three Lectures on Certain Phases of Art and Religion in the Roman Empire. MRS. ARTHUR STRONG. Constable & Co. 1915. Pp. xxii, 293. 8s. 6d.

The three lectures which this book contains were delivered in the fall of 1913 on the Charles Eliot Norton Foundation of the Archæological Institute of America, before some twenty-five centres of the Institute and before a number of universities and colleges in this country. Mrs. Strong has now published them in somewhat expanded form, beautifully illustrated by thirty-two plates.

As we should expect, the lectures deal quite as much with art as with religion, and Mrs. Strong's wide acquaintance with monuments makes it possible for her to draw from many sources for illustrations of her theme. Her well-known interest in Roman art appears in the introductory address to students, in which she calls attention to the new attitude toward the art of Rome, and expresses her satisfaction that scholars no longer regard the first three centuries of the Empire as a period of complete decadence, but rather see in it a continuous development from the art of Greece and the East.

In her first lecture on "The Influence of the Imperial Apotheosis on Antique Design," she treats the apotheosis of the emperors as a factor in bringing about a return in the fourth and succeeding centuries to a scheme of composition which she discovers also in early Greek art—that is to say, the deified emperor was made the central motif. His image or statue is represented with a frontal pose looking squarely toward the spectator, and all the other figures have a centripetal relation. A similar arrangement Mrs. Strong finds in early Greek art, where figures were apotropaic, as, for example, the Gorgon in the pediment of the early temple at Corfu, or where divinity was to be emphasized. In the great period of Greek art this earlier scheme was modified by the fact that the Greeks had a pantheon of Olympian gods, no one of which universally imposed his claim to supreme adoration and devotion. There was a lack of a central theme to concentrate the artistic impulse, with the possible exception of the pediment sculptures of the temple of Zeus at Olympia, for the exact arrangement of which we are unfortunately obliged to resort to conjecture. One may raise the question at this point as to whether Mrs. Strong in her discussion of the change from the centralized composition of early Greek art to the more narrative schemes of the great period, does not underestimate the desire of the Greek artist to attain action, ease, and fluidity of composition.

In Roman art the imperial apotheosis provided the central motif, and we find gradually developing in the first three Christian centuries

forms of design in which the emperor occupies the centre of the composition. In one sense this attains its complete form in the reliefs on the Arch of Constantine. Gradually Christ replaced the emperor, so that, in Mrs. Strong's view, the *majestas* of the deified emperor paved the way for the *majestas* of Christian art. On these matters others are more competent to judge than the present reviewer, but he cannot refrain from expressing in general his feeling that while Mrs. Strong's main contentions are good, she forces her evidence over-much. And this suspicion grows as he reads the rest of the book.

Lectures II and III deal with religious matters more strictly, for they are given to the "Symbolism of the After Life" and to "Roman Tombstones." The greater part, however, of the second lecture is devoted to tracing the origin of sepulchral imagery, and in the search we are carried back to Mycenæan and early Peloponnesian *stelae*. The historical survey occupies practically the whole of this lecture. The third lecture deals with the symbolism of the soul's apotheosis, with the eagle and the wreath which Cumont has shown are of Syrian origin, and with the Mithraic, Orphic, and Dionysiac elements which Roman tombstones in the Provinces especially exhibit. It is an interesting fact that there is comparatively little symbolism on Roman tombstones which can be connected with a belief in immortality until the end of the Republic; however, with the diffusion of a philosophy of religion which did not exclude at any rate a belief in immortality, and with the spread of Oriental doctrines, the symbolism of the future life becomes more common. But when Mrs. Strong (p. 202) sees in the representation of the story of Rhea Silvia and of Mars an allegory of death as a sacred marriage, we can hardly follow her. Her words,

"The Soul awakes to a vision of the divine, even as Rhea awakes from her weary slumber to behold the immortal lover swiftly descending to comfort her, for death is itself but sleep which leads to a blessed awakening and consummation,"

will hardly carry conviction to most students of her theme. She concludes with a discussion of an extremely interesting monument of the third century, still standing at Igel near Trèves, which should have careful consideration.

The three lectures as a whole contain a wealth of suggestive detail and deserve most careful examination; but at the same time, as the reviewer has already intimated, he does not find them wholly "convincing," if he may resort to a word drawn from the jargon of

literary reviewers. Over-interpretation, too subtle an imagination, and excessive readiness to combine things which are disparate, cause many blemishes in this book, for all its great learning.

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